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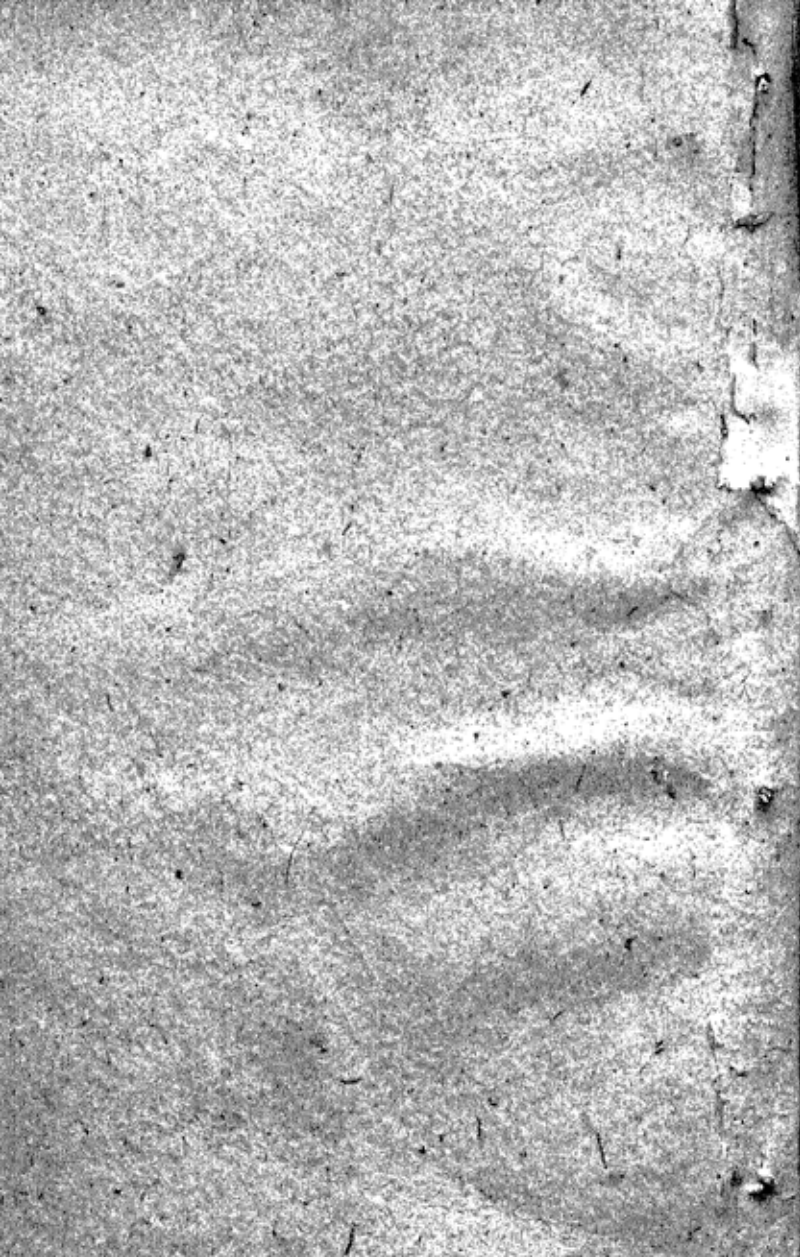
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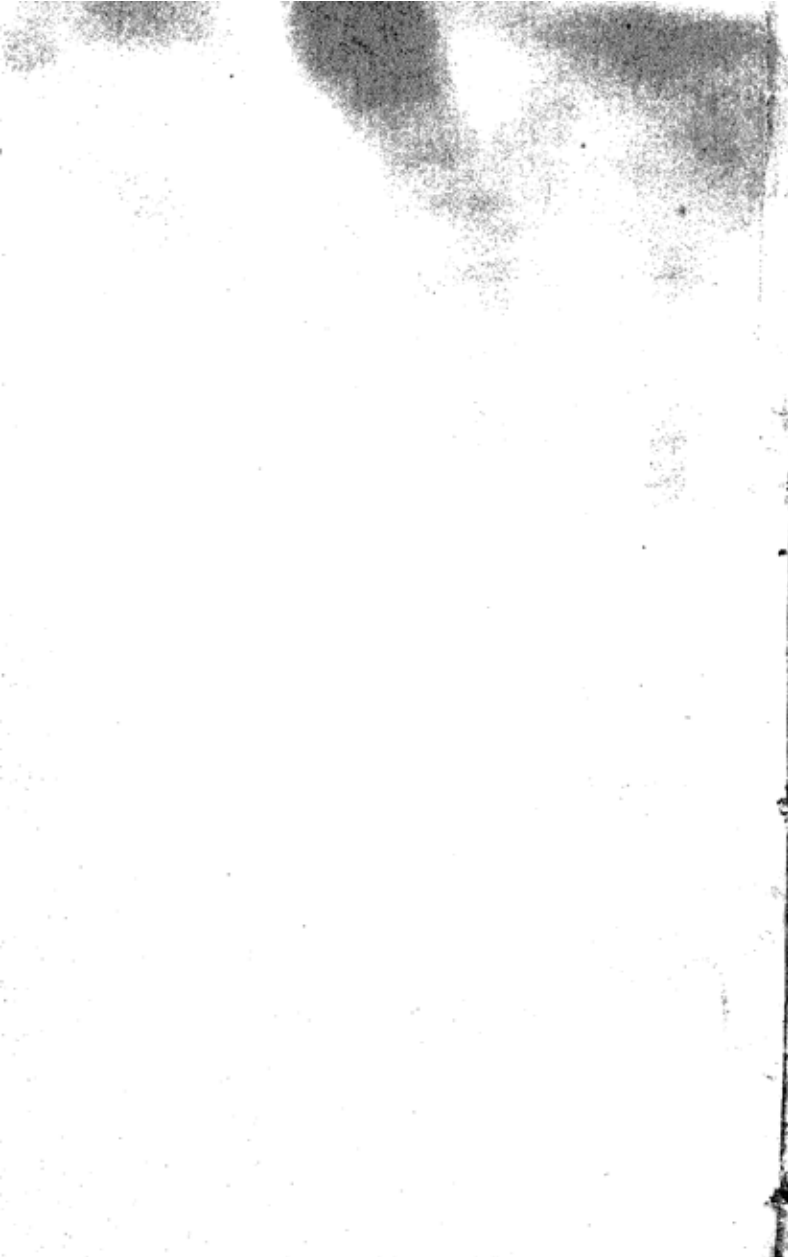
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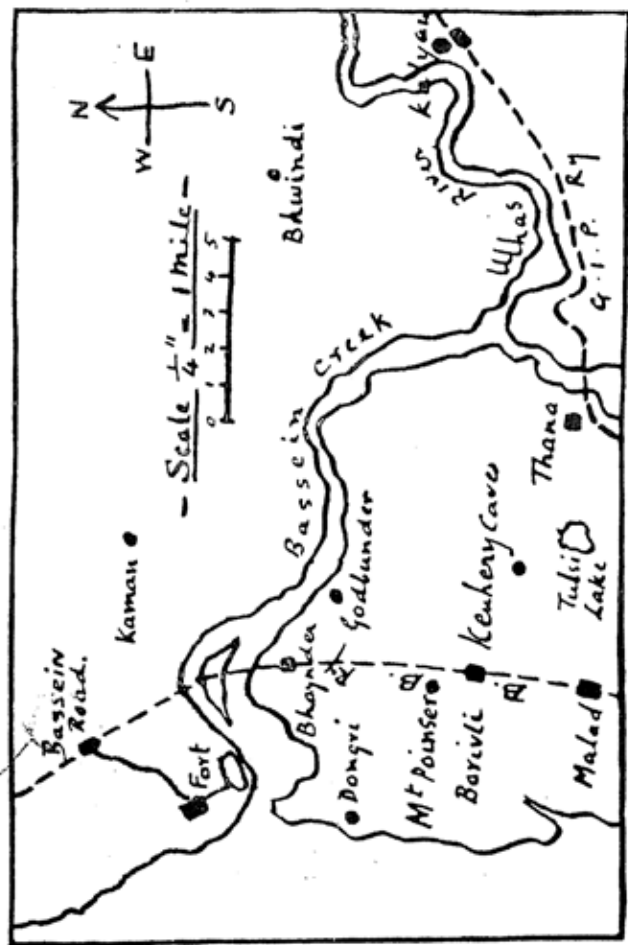
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New Edition, 1941

A Short Guide to Bassein



By Father Hull



ENVIRONS OF BASSEIN

(For Plan of Bassein Fort see Inside Back Cover.)

A Short Guide to Bassein

After Goa itself, probably the most interesting object connected with Portuguese history in India is the fortified city of Bassein. It is situated 33 miles north of Bombay just on the mainland beyond the island of Salsette. At least it is mainland now although in ancient times it was an island.

How To Get There

At present (March 1941) the weekday train-service on the B. B. & C. I. Railway is as follows:—

Church Gate (Bombay)	6.20	7.25	8.10	9.38
Bassein Road	..	7.50	8.50	9.35 11.03

Convenient return-trains in the evening are:—

Bassein Road	3.55*	5.32	6.45
Church Gate	5.26	6.50	8.00

On Sundays and Public Holidays trains leave Church Gate at 6-40, 8-00 and 9-30, and return-trains leave Bassein Road at 3-41; 5-09 and 6-35.

The earlier trains out are recommended for a complete exploration of the ruins—at least that at 7.25. But the 8.10 train out and the 5.32 train back give quite a satisfactory day and make it less tiring.

All provisions should be taken. Aerated waters can be bought in Bassein village. Pure water can be got from the well of the Franciscan Brothers near the Citadel in the middle of the Fort.

Taking train at your nearest station on the B. B. & C. I. Railway you enter the island of Salsette at Bandra

* Not on Saturdays.

and reach Borivli in about one hour. Six miles more bring you to Bhayndar with its salt-bunder. Then comes the bridge $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles long across the creek. The Fort of Bassein can be seen about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles away to the west, at the entrance of the creek, the church towers rising conspicuously above the walls.

It is possible to proceed from Bhayndar to Bassein by water. But except on the pilgrimage-day once a year there is no public service of boats, which can only be got by previous private arrangement; besides which the tide and wind have to be carefully considered. The obvious and safe way is therefore to pass on to Bassein Road Station about 3 miles beyond the creek.

There are plenty of motor buses and taxis in attendance at the station; and they run to the village of Bassein at a tariff-rate of about 4 annas per passenger. More has to be paid to be carried to the Fort. A small party can take a whole taxi holding five passengers at about Rs. 1-4 eachway. Larger parties can take a whole bus. Engage your vehicle for the return journey, with instructions to return to the Fort at a fixed time to take you back to the station; and do not pay till the double journey is completed. The distance is only 5 miles, but it is better to allow three-quarters of an hour for contingencies. A drive along the road running south-west brings you after four miles to the village of Bassein, where a turn at right angles to the left is made; and another mile brings you to the entrance of the Fort.

The country round about is thickly inhabited by Catholic Christians whose women are distinguishable by the use of long sleeves, while in other respects their costume is like that of the Hindus. They number about 25,700 in the district, and form a large proportion of the population of the coast-strip between the railway and the sea. As mentioned before, Bassein was formerly an island about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile long and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide, separated by a

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creek just on the land side of the railway. The district contains twelve parish churches served by secular clergy, scattered about from Agashi on the north to Bassein creek on the south, and two convents, one at Sandor and one at Agashi. The people are mostly of the labouring classes, fisherfolk or cultivators of bananas, sugar-cane, palm-trees or vegetables. They are descendants of the converts made by the Portuguese while Bassein flourished, and have retained much of the simplicity of those early days.

The Fort City

The Portuguese city of Bassein is oval in form, measuring about two-thirds of a mile from east to west, and one-third of a mile from north to south; the circuit of the walls being a mile and a half. It stands just at the corner of the land where the creek joins the sea. The visitor enters the enclosure through a breach in the wall at the west end, close by the land gate; and there is a straight modern road running through the city to another breach at the east end, close by the sea gate—beyond which there is a landing stage or bunder jutting out into the creek. It is entirely a Portuguese creation, dating from 1534 [the year in which King Henry VIII broke with the Church and separated England from the Holy See]. Previous to this the country was under Hindu dominion till about the year 1290, when it fell into the hands of the Mohammedans. When the Portuguese arrived it was part of the dominions of Bahadur Shah, Sultan of Gujerat, whose capital was at Ahmedabad and his chief seaport at Cambay. Bassein was also a place of some importance to him for trade and shipping. The modern name has its pedigree of evolution as follows: Hindu *Wasai*; Moslem *Bassai*; Portuguese *Baçaim*; English Bassein.

It will be profitable to mention that the Portuguese first reached the shores of India in 1498. They settled at Calicut the same year, Cochin in 1502, Cannanore in 1505, Ceylon and Mylapore in 1507; took Goa in 1510, Chaul 1516, Bombay, Salsette and Bassein 1533, Karanja 1534, Diu 1535, Damaun 1559. This gives Bassein its place in the series.

UNDER THE PORTUGUESE, 1534-1739

The Portuguese first visited the coast of Bassein in 1509. In 1526 they established a small factory there, but could not hold it in security. Hence their desire to obtain a permanent footing led to the use of force.* In 1530 and 1531 they raided, burnt and pillaged the town, and carried away 4,000 slaves whom they used for building the churches of Goa. The Moslems thereupon built a small fort, which was only just completed when the next year (1533) the Portuguese invaded it, took it by storm and then demolished it. The Sultan of Gujerat then agreed to make terms of peace. A treaty was drawn up (December 23rd, 1533) which ceded Bassein to the Portuguese, with the right to build fortifications and to levy taxes on the Red Sea trade; and their possession of Thana, Salsette and Bombay, secured shortly before, was confirmed.

The Portuguese at once began to establish themselves. They first built a small citadel on the spot where the Moslem fort had been, and began planning out a city to be enclosed within a large circuit of walls. Such a defence was quite necessary, for they were constantly

*The justification of such warlike violence on the part of the Portuguese lay in the fact that there was a chronic state of war between the Cross and Crescent right through the middle ages; and as the Moslems had invaded Europe and taken whatever they could there, the Christians claimed the right to take whatever they could from the Moslems in the East.

liable to attacks. The walls were completed by about 1600 and afterwards improved on. But it seems from a traveller's account in 1695 that some of the bastions were not even then finished. At any rate the formation of a well-organized city went on. Between 1535¹ and 1600, palaces, public offices, warehouses, churches and monasteries were built, as well as houses for civilians—with straight streets and squares—the only known later additions being an outer portal to the citadel in 1606, and a church of the Hospitallers in 1685.

Having thus reached the zenith of prosperity, there came a period of decline, the external causes of which were the rivalries of the English and the Dutch, while the domestic reasons lay deeper. First, religious intolerance of various kinds alienated the minds of the Hindu population, and prevented the knitting of the Portuguese dominions into an organic whole. Secondly, the old spirit of chivalry declined and gave way to luxury, sensuality, avarice and self-seeking—the officials being far more interested in trade and the acquisition of wealth than the well-being of the State. The incidence of plague in 1690 also did much mischief by robbing the city of one-third of its population. When in that year the Marathas first approached Bassein, the city was ill-prepared to meet them. The fortifications were reported to be in poor repair, and the garrison weak and ill-disciplined. Forty-nine years later the crash came. In 1739 the Marathas invested the city, and broke through a weak place near the St. Sebastian corner on the west side ; whereupon the city capitulated. The terms were honourable enough. The garrison was allowed to march out with all the honours of war, and eight days were allowed to the civilians to leave the city if they wished, taking with them all their movable property. All the Europeans, military, civil and religious, departed to Goa, and a number of the

better-class Christian population also left the district—some of them taking refuge in Bombay, others perhaps in Goa.

By this catastrophe the Portuguese lost all their northern dominions along the Bombay coast (from Chaul southwards to Bulsar northwards), retaining only the two small colonies of Damaun and Diu. Their possession of Bassein lasted just 205 years (1534-1739).

As to the numbers of the population, a census of 1720 gives the following figures: Native Christians 58,131, Europeans 2,368: Total 60,499. It is clear, however, that so large a population was not contained in the city, especially as we know that one-third of its area was entirely unpopulated, and much of the remaining space was occupied by the citadel, churches and monasteries. In addition to this we also learn that no non-Christians were allowed to reside within the walls; and of the Christians, artisans and labourers were also excluded, and only the gentry and merchant classes admitted. One author even says that no natives, even Christians, were allowed to live in the city, except of course servants and those employed in necessary work. The conclusion is that the actual population of the city was rather small, probably about 3,000; and the large figures above-quoted represented not only the inhabitants of the city but also the Christian population of the surrounding districts subject to Bassein including Salsette and Karanja.

UNDER THE MARATHAS, 1739-1802

Resuming our history, we find that when the Marathas took possession of Bassein they tried to keep it up as a city. To take the place of the Portuguese they invited high-class Brahmins to come and settle in it. They also employed a number of Brahmins in Government pay to perform the "purification" of Christians who

wished to revert to Hinduism. There is no sign that they were forced to this step. But we can understand how easy it would be, for some at least, to think that Christianity was bound up with the Portuguese name and nation ; a thing to be discarded when they were gone.

In any case, it is quite certain that there was a good deal of falling away either at that time or gradually later on ; and the present Christian population of Bassein and Salsette represents only a remnant of what it ought to be, if allowance is made for increase by propagation during nearly two centuries. I am inclined to think, however, that the falling off was not due to active propaganda, but chiefly to the want of moral support, and specially the absence of a sufficient number of clergy to keep up the Faith.

We read in the Thana Gazetteer that on the cession of Bassein the Portuguese Government asked for the security of only five churches : three in Bassein city (which, is not known), one in the Bassein district (Nandakal?) and one in Salsette (Thana ?). The writer goes on : "When the conquest was completed the native Christians showed more constancy and the Marathas more toleration than could have been expected. Under a Vicar-General who lived at Kurla, the native or, as they were called, the "Canorein" vicars managed the churches, and kept the bulk of the people from forsaking Christianity."*

UNDER THE BRITISH, 1802 SEQ.

Taking the fact that three churches were spared in the Fort of Bassein, we cannot infer from this that very many Christians remained there to make use of them. Still less can we suppose that they were kept

*Canorein almost certainly means Canarese, showing that these clergy came from Goa.

in repair. The Maratha attempt to keep up the city seems to have been a failure. The English took Bassein in 1774, and again, in 1780, but each time gave it back again. Finally by the treaty of Bassein in 1802 it became a British possession and was in 1818 incorporated in the Bombay Presidency. A report of this date shows that Bassein was of no military value ; the ramparts were overgrown with bushes, and scarcely a house was habitable. A small garrison was stationed in one of the gates, but the place was kept locked. This is proof-positive that it was already deserted even by the Marathas. In 1825, Bishop Heber found it perfectly uninhabited, full of ruined houses and churches overgrown with trees. In 1830 it seems to have been abandoned even by the guard. A sugar factory was then started by one Mr. Lingard, but was given up when he died. In 1838 Mrs. Postans found a few fishermen and hunters living there. In 1852 another attempt was made to revive the sugar factory, which was erected in the Church of N. S. da Vida. In 1856 two breaches were made in the walls and a metalled road run through from the town to the bunder for cart traffic. In 1860 the Fort was let on lease to Major Littlewood, who carried on the sugar business till 1872 or 1874. His son continued to hold the lease, which would expire in 1910, but died a few years before that date. Hence in 1906 the Fort was taken over again by Government and destined for the development of a botanical garden. The ancient roadways were cleared, but the ruins spared.

THE PROCESS OF DECAY

Taking these notes together, we can now form some conjecture as to how the churches gradually came into the state in which they are at present. In the matter of religion the Marathas were not intolerant, nor were they addicted to the systematic destruction of churches

or the forcible uprooting of Christianity. It is traditional to ascribe the ruin of the churches of the whole neighbourhood to the devastations of the Marathas ; and quite probably in some cases damage was done in the heat of the fighting as part of the general destruction and pillage. Still I am inclined to hold that the ruination of the old churches was not on the whole due to the Maratha army, but to other causes which we shall now go on to consider.*

It seems that the ruins have not undergone much deterioration within the last thirty years or so. We also know that as far back as 1818 the buildings were in a ruinous condition with scarcely a house habitable. It is evident that the great part of the decay took place under the Maratha dominion of about 70 years. Now let us picture the likely course of events.

First there is the natural decay, which is always very rapid in India. The windows and doors would fall in ; the roofs gradually rot away ; the monsoons would work havoc on the walls. One of the remarkable features of Portuguese history is the frequency with which they had to rebuild their churches, often at intervals of fifty years. Still more rapid would be the dilapidation when there was no one to look after repairs. This is the first factor.

The second is the helping hand of man. The Bassein district is not rich in stones ready for the builder, and people would help themselves to building-materials

* Not the Marathas but the Moslems destroyed a church and orphanage at Agashi in 1540 ; the Sidi pirates burnt Remedios Church near Bassein in 1692, and the Muscat Arabs burnt villages and churches in Salsette in 1694 and even killed some priests and took 1,400 captives. Not the Marathas but the English engineers destroyed St. Anne's and the Mount Chapel, Bandra, in 1737. The Marathas are in some cases reported to have taken lead and roof timbers and church bells ; but that is as far as my evidence goes.

wherever they could be got. Old Goa was used as a quarry for the building of Panjim ; and this accounts for the total disappearance of so many churches there. Similarly at Bassein ; quite probably the Fort was rifled of wood and stone for the building of the modern village of Bassein close by, and the erection of the bunder. The sugar factory was responsible for a certain amount of havoc and disfigurement, e.g., furnaces, chimneys, pillars, pedestals for machinery, demolition for the sake of building materials, etc. Perhaps even materials were taken thence to rebuild some of the Christian churches in the neighbourhood. We know that the churches of the Fort were divested of their religious objects by the Christians themselves. Everywhere we go, not only in the Bassein district but even in Salsette down as far as Bandra itself, we find altars, statues, doors, pulpits and pictures in the old Portuguese style, which the people tell us were taken from Bassein ; and the same is true of the church bells. At what date this rifling took place we have not ascertained. Some of it might have been done under the Marathas when the city was practically deserted, the rest under British rule after the garrison was removed.

In this way I think the present condition of the ruins can be fairly well explained.

Survey of the Churches

Having thus followed the history of Bassein city as a whole, we now turn to the ecclesiastical department.

The earliest Religious Order* under the Portuguese

* A Religious Order means an organized society of men or women who live in community under a rule and take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to superiors. They aim at a more perfect practice of the Catholic religion in themselves, and work for the spiritual good of other people by means of instruction, education and charity.

regime in India was that of the *Franciscans*. They came to Goa about 1517, and were the first to settle in Bassein, where they founded a church of St. Anthony close by the Land Gate, with a convent* attached, probably about 1537. Next came the *Jesuits*, who settled at Goa in 1542 and founded a house, church and college at Bassein in 1549. Thirdly, the *Dominicans* settled in Goa in 1548, and built their church and convent at Bassein in 1583. After them came the *Augustinians*, who reached Goa only in 1572, and founded their church and convent at Bassein probably in 1595. Finally, the *Hospitallers of St. John of God* reached Goa only in 1681. They came to Bassein in 1685, and we read that in 1695 they had a convent in Bassein, but apparently small and poor, so that it could support only three members.

These were the five Religious Orders that settled in Bassein. The others, such as the Theatines, Oratorians, Carmelites and Lazarists, did not come to Bassein at all. This gives us five Orders of religious, with five churches and convents which have to be identified among the ruins of Bassein.

But besides these Orders there were the secular clergy. A few seculars are mentioned as coming from Europe to Goa in the early days. But after 1570, whenever we read of "secular clergy" they were all natives of India. They were drawn from the earliest converts, and educated at Goa in the first instance. But later on seminaries were founded in other centres, and so some

* In modern times a "convent" is popularly taken to mean a house of nuns, while a monastery is a house of male religious. More correctly "monastery" means a house of monks who lead a solitary contemplative life. The term "convent" means "conventus" or a collection of religious; and in this true sense it was used among the Portuguese. "Cloister" again properly means a canonical religious enclosure to which outsiders are not admitted; but in popular use it generally refers to a covered arcade round a quadrangle in a religious house.

of them in the Bassein district may have been drawn from the locality.

As regards secular churches in Bassein, we know there were two. In 1546 the King of Portugal ordered that a parish church should be founded, under the dedication of *St. Joseph*; and the expenses of its endowment were ordered to be taken out of the revenues of certain mosques which had been destroyed by the Portuguese. It was called the *Matriz* or *St.*, which latter name has in recent times led to the mistake of calling it *St. Joseph's Cathedral*. Obviously there can only be a cathedral where there is a bishop; and Bassein was merely an outlying part of the Archdiocese of Goa. Still the name sticks.

The other church called *N. S. da Vida* (Our Lady of Life) was attached to the Citadel, so that its walls are actually the walls of the fortification. It was built at the same time as the Citadel, in about 1535.

This gives us a total of five conventual churches and two secular churches, seven in all. There are in the ruins actually seven. Those of *St. Joseph* and *N. S. da Vida*, as well as the Franciscan, Jesuit and Dominican churches and convents, are clearly identified. There is some uncertainty about the other two, one of which belonged to the Augustinians, and the other to the Hospitallers.* One traveller says that there were about thirteen churches in Bassein, but there is no trace of more than these seven in the Fort. The number thirteen must therefore have included those of the district outside the walls.

The only other ruins which can be identified are the

* The identification of the Bassein churches was very badly done by da Cunha, in his book on "Bassein and Chaul," especially as regards the Dominicans, Augustinians and Hospitallers; and the Thana Gazetteer followed his lead.

The conclusions embodied in these pages are the result of matured study and seem to be safe.

Palace of the General of the North and the Palace of the Captain of Bassein. There is a large area of walls and foundations covered with jungle and unexplored ; but what can be seen of them shows that they were ordinary buildings, such as public offices, warehouses and private houses. There are also two cement tanks, probably ornaments to private gardens ; but no sign of any other churches or chapels has yet been found.

The architectural inspiration throughout is radically "Renaissance," with no touch of gothic ; the standard is second-best compared to Goa.

Exploring the Ruins

On arriving within the walls, the tourist has to decide where he will settle down for his intervals of rest. After several experiments I found that the most suitable place was the area in front of the Jesuit church, to which the conveyance can drive by a circuitous route. After light refreshments if needed, begin by taking a turn round the south-west quarter, making use of the Plan all the time. This will occupy about an hour, and includes seven places of interest.

THE JESUIT CHURCH

(1) *The Jesuit Church* is on the spot where you have been resting. In recent years a pilgrimage to Bassein was inaugurated once a year in honour of St. Gonsalo Garcia who was born at Bassein of a Portuguese father and a "Canorein" mother ; became a Franciscan tertiary, was martyred in Japan in 1597, and canonized among the Japanese Martyrs (February 5th). In order to celebrate this feast the church of the Jesuits was roofed over and partly repaired. Observe the façade with the Jesuit emblem IHS. See everywhere the signs of pieces of cut stone having been forcibly torn away for use else-

where. Read the tombstones of benefactors in the sanctuary, also the inscription over the door of the side-wing indicating the addition of that part in 1636, though the place was founded in 1549. Wander round the quadrangle, and identify the refectory and kitchen, sacristy and lecture halls, guest room, sodality chapel, etc.

The Jesuit buildings included a College of general education for the city. One traveller tells us that it was called an "Academy," and that the students attended the lectures here but lived in the town. It was also no doubt attended by the native students of the Seminary close by. The College possessed a library of theology, commentaries on Scripture, etc. In 1634 there were fifteen Jesuits attached to the establishment but some of them served the churches of the neighbourhood, at Manikpur, Nirmol, etc. The rear wing of the buildings extends as far as the walls; and there are two windows or doorways opening on to the ramparts from the upper storey.

The church is now traditionally called "St. Paul's"; but I have not found any historical basis for this. The original small church, built in 1549 of clay with a thatched roof, was dedicated to "Madre de Deus"—the Mother of God. In 1560 the residence was elevated to a "College of the Holy Name of Jesus."* The title of the church was then naturally changed into that of the Holy Name, and the statue of Our Lady was transferred from the main altar to a side altar.

The present name "St. Paul's" is probably explainable

* This College must be distinguished from that which was founded by King John III as a "seminary for the conversion of the heathen" with an annual endowment of 2,070 Pardaos, and confided to the Franciscans. They, being preoccupied in Mission work, asked St. Francis Xavier to take it over from them—which he agreed to do in 1548. The Franciscans, however, kept half the annuity, with which they endowed a College of their own at Mount Poincur.

in this way : There was a College of the Holy Faith in Goa which was taken over by the Jesuits, and as the church was dedicated to St. Paul, it came to be known as the College of St. Paul. From this the Jesuits came popularly to be called "Paulistas" or Paulistines, and carried this nickname with them wherever they went. The church at Bassein might thus have come to be spoken of as the Paulistine church or church of St. Paul.

Besides the main group of the church, residence and college, there is another outlying group of buildings about 70 yards away in a westerly direction, which is so ruinous and choked with vegetation as to be practically inaccessible. This seems to have been the earliest establishment, started in 1549, and consisted of a hostel for Seminarians and Catechumens, a small house for the Fathers and perhaps the original small church. The present church, residence and college were next started in 1561 and finished in 1578. It was only in 1636 that the guest house and sodality chapel were added and the same line of buildings run out to link the new establishment with the original one—the frontage being then conformed to the street line. The space stretching to the walls behind was laid out as a garden, which grew figs and even grapes. A boundary wall still exists dividing it from the Augustinian compound next door.

THE AUGUSTINIAN CHURCH

(2) A little beyond the boundary of the Jesuit establishment, and close to the ramparts, is a church and convent in a very ruinous condition. Only a few pieces of wall survive, but they show good and careful work in cut stone—perhaps one of the reasons why it was rifled so extensively for building-materials. It bears no marks of identification, but I think we are safe in attributing it to the Augustinians, who came here about the year

1595. In the year 1634 there were eight members of the Order in residence. The lines of the church can be traced, and the sanctuary is nearly intact. Only the bases of the cloister-columns remain. The title of the church seems to have been "N.S. da Anunciação."

There is said to have been a retreat for girls in charge of Augustinian Nuns, but it was not strictly a convent, and no trace of it survives.

THE FRANCISCAN CHURCH

(3) Close by this, more to the north, is a long plain wall, at the end of which is the church of St. Anthony with convent attached, belonging to the Franciscans. It was the first convent in Bassein, founded probably in 1537 by Fray Antonio do Porto. The church was built later, in about 1557. It has a porch of three arches at the entrance, and is fairly well preserved. There is a segmental arch inside at the door end, wonderfully well built and still intact. It supported a gallery, used perhaps for the choir. There are also several side-chapels, in some of which tombstones of notables are found, the earliest dating 1558. The quadrangle and refectory of the convent are still standing, and the buildings are extensive.

In this connection it will be of interest to say that St. Francis Xavier was in Bassein three times :—first in 1544 on his way to Diu ; secondly, early in 1548 to see the Viceroy and to visit the Sultan at Cambay ; and thirdly, at the close of the same year. Each time he was a guest in the Franciscan convent, which was the only convent then existing. Whether he actually lived in the present convent buildings is uncertain, as the date of their erection is not known. Parts of them may have existed already in 1544-1548. During his last visit he accepted the charge of the College which

had been started by the Franciscans, and left some Fathers there to commence the work of building.

In 1634 there were thirty Franciscans at Bassein; some of them serving the churches at Agashi and elsewhere in the neighbourhood.

THE LAND GATE

(4) Close by, at the back of this convent, a flight of steps leads to the walls, and to the top of the Land Gate—a platform which gives a good view of the city, as well as a prospect of the country round. Looking in the sea direction you will notice a projecting bastion a hundred yards away. This is the “Sam Sebastiam,” through which the Marathas broke in 1739. But the breach was repaired by the Marathas, and the portal built up, so that no trace of it is to be seen now. In the middle of the platform you look down and see the Land Gate from above—an angular passage between the inner and outer gates, and a blind alley which may have been meant to puzzle the enemy if he broke in. Coming down by the same steps you can walk round and enter the gate from ground-level. There is an ornamental inner portal, with a teak door which has fallen down; and the outer gate is studded with spikes to prevent ramming by elephants.

THE HOSPITALLERS' CHURCH

(5) Coming out of the gate again, you will see, a short distance away near the modern road, an isolated church in a bad condition. It is not strictly identified, but by elimination we must assign it to the Hospitallers of St. John of God, who came to India only in 1681. They seem to have built the church in 1685, under the title of “N. S. da Saude.” But they were very poor, and in 1695 they had only three members in residence.

Hence probably they did not build a convent or hospital—no trace of connected buildings being visible. Perhaps they merely took charge of the existing "Misericordia," about which we shall speak later.

(6) and (7). Close by are two small tanks of cement, one in the jungle being set with shells and called the "shell-bath," but probably it was nothing but a tank for a garden.

This exhausts the south-west quarter, and takes about an hour. You can now return to the Jesuit church for a light meal and a short rest. After this comes the remainder of the exploration which includes all the other places of note and will occupy an hour and a half or even longer.

THE CITADEL

(8) Walking eastwards along the road which passes the Jesuit church you reach the modern bungalow of the Franciscan Brothers—about which later—opposite which is the S.W. corner of the *Citadel*. Although called "circular" by several writers, it is really a four-square structure measuring 150 yards by 100 yards with high walls and three round bastions, built in 1536 on the site of the smaller Moslem fort. Apparently it contained nothing but barracks, magazines, etc. In 1634 the garrison numbered 2,400 all told (400 Europeans, 200 Native Christians, with 1,800 slave auxiliaries). The only objects of interest are the three round bastions, and the Gateway at the southeast corner added in 1606, which we shall see later.

N. S. DA VIDA

(9) On reaching the S. W. corner of the Citadel just mentioned, you turn north (i.e., left) and walk parallel to the wall as far as the N. W. corner, and reach the

"great square." Here, attached to the fortification, is the *Church of N. S. da Vida*, the garrison church, with one door from the citadel and another from the great square. The date of erection is early, probably 1535. It must have been served first by the Franciscans, but later on came into the hands of the secular clergy. One traveller calls it the parish church of N. S. da Vida.

The curious lumps of masonry inside are part of the sugar factory which existed here about half a century ago. There are no inscriptions in this church. There is a priest's house behind the sanctuary, and by the stairway you can go up to the ramparts. Looking down into the Citadel you find nothing but bare ground and irrigation canals, and it is useless proceeding further.

(10) Attached to the priest's house is an isolated tall tower, quite plain, which was probably used once for a belfry and a watch tower ; and then a long barrack room and officers' rooms. These attached buildings are very curious.

THE GREAT SQUARE

(11) Coming out of N. S. da Vida you are in *The Great Square*. Its middle is now occupied by an octagonal district bungalow, a Hindu temple built in Maratha times, and a long tank in the shape of a letter L which was dug out to supply water to the sugar factory.

(12) On the left or west side is the *Palace of the Captain of Bassein*, with its front arcadings complete, and a coat-of-arms over the stairway inside. There are some plain walls behind it and to one side, which may have been public offices, or perhaps the jail.

(13) Opposite the palace of the Captain, on the east side of the tank, there is another building called the *Palace of the General of the North*, of which only the handsome façade remains. Opposite, at the north end of the tank, is the base of a public Cross.

THE DOMINICAN CHURCH

(14) A little further back northwards is the *Dominican Church and Convent* built about 1583 under the title of São Gonsalo (not St. Gonsalo Garcia). There is no question of its identity, because over the side door of the church is a cross with fleur-de-lis ends, two stars at the end of rods, and two dogs holding lighted torches in their mouths. These form the Dominican emblem, derived from the dream of St. Dominic's mother. The IHS above only shows that this monogram was not the monopoly of the Jesuits, being common property long before that Order was founded.* The two doorways at the end of the church and in the cloister wall are also ornamental, but bear nothing distinctive. The convent is a fine square, but unfortunately the arches and pillars of the quadrangle have been removed. There are several tombstones in the church.

THE MISERICORDIA

(15) There was somewhere near the citadel a "Misericordia" or Home for Widows, Orphans and the Sick, managed by pious lay people—which Da Cunha wrongly identified with the Dominican buildings.†

* The emblem was popularized by St. Bernardine of Siena (1380-1444) while preaching devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus in about 1424—the feast of which was established in 1530. It was adopted by the Franciscans and Dominicans, and afterwards by the Jesuits, who made it distinctive by adding the cross in the middle and the three nails underneath.

† Da Cunha's muddle over identifications arose from a false start. He mistook the fleur-de-lis cross for a Maltese cross. Then a Maltese cross reminded him of the medieval Knights Hospitallers, and from them he jumped to the Hospitallers of St. John of God (no connection). Therefore this convent was theirs! He went on to identify it with the "Misericordia" which existed long before the Hospitallers of St. John of God came to Bassein, and was a lay institution. Hence he pushed the Dominicans into the Augustinian church, and the Augustinians into the Hospitallers' church, as a logical outcome of one simple initial blunder.

It is mentioned by a traveller in 1634 as being close to the residence of the Captain. In 1695 another traveller speaks of hearing Mass in the "Church of the Misericordia which is the parish of the city." This points to St. Joseph's, or possibly to N. S. da Vida. But no identification of the "Misericordia" itself seems possible. It was probably a plain building with no distinctive marks. One thing quite certain is that it was *not* the Dominican convent. Nor was it the Hospitallers', for it existed long before the Hospitallers arrived.

THE PORTAL

(16) Returning to the Citadel walls, there is an inscription somewhere stating that they were built in 1536, but I have not seen it. The masonry pillars on top of the wall seem to be modern, built in connection with the sugar factory. Walking east and then south round the Citadel, you come to the gate of the fortification at the S. E. corner—the outside portal of which was added in 1606, as the inscription declares. The inner gate has a groove for a portcullis. Entering the Citadel through it, you will see nothing but a fresh view of N. S. da Vida and the tall tower; also the modern chimney of the sugar factory in the corner.

ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH

(17) Coming out of the portal you now walk straight on eastwards till you reach the *Matrix or Mother-Church of St. Joseph*. The tower is the best preserved and most ornamental in Bassein. But do not attempt to climb up the winding staircase on the right. One explorer found the steps crumbling under his feet; and another venturesome person, who did go up, got on a rotten stone and fell and broke his neck. Over the door is an inscription stating that the church was rebuilt in 1601.

Inside you will find a tombstone of the priest under whom the church (originally founded in 1546) was rebuilt. He died at Goa, and his remains were transferred here. On the epistle side is a large vaulted transept which was almost certainly a baptistery. On the other side a small chapel or shrine was added later. Behind the baptistery is what appears to have been a presbytery close to the wall, with a passage to the church. The church of St. Joseph was at first served by "a Prior and four chaplains" or beneficed clergy; afterwards it was the residence of a "Vigario da Vara," belonging to the secular clergy. It was the chief parish church of the city.

THE SEA GATE

(18) This completes the survey of the churches. A short walk further east leads to the *Sea Gate*; a simpler structure than the Land Gate, because there was no chance of a strong attack on this side. The doors are covered with knobbed bars of iron and bear the date 1720. Of course the masonry was built before this.

(19) Passing through the gate you find yourself on a plot of land leading to the modern bund, where boats lie moored. Take a view of the creek and country round. On the Bassein side is the distant plateau of Tungar, noted for an attempt to turn it into a hill station in 1866. Eastwards the hills of the mainland and of Salsette overlap each other, so that you cannot see the creek which wanders between them. Nearer is the long railway bridge. To the south across the water are the hills of Dharavi island, where some of the stone for building Bassein was probably quarried. At the foot was a reservoir for supplying Bassein with good water which was carried across the creek in boats. On the summit is the Jesuit church of Dongri just perceptible about six miles away.

(20) The return to the Jesuit church can be made in three ways. That along the modern cart-road is dreary. I would merely call attention to the fact that the space on the right or north of this road is entirely bare. Possibly it was never occupied at all. Perhaps it was reserved for the cultivation of crops in case of a siege, as some have suggested. It is said that the plague of 1690 cleared the city of one-third of its inhabitants, and this bare space may be the consequence of the clearance. At any rate it never was occupied by any "pucca" buildings such as would leave anything of their structure behind.

ALONG THE RAMPARTS

(21) The second way back is as you came, taking a look at the ruins once more. But I will show you a more excellent way, and that is to go back by the ramparts. Those on the north side are not worth doing and they are almost impassible. Those on the south or creek side are well worth traversing ; but timid people should not try the exploit. At the back of St. Joseph's you will find a flight of steps up. For some distance keep a lookout for the awkward little grooves which cross the ramparts at short intervals under your feet. At each bastion take a view through the loopholes at the scene outside. Be patient with the trees which encroach on your way. Knock them with a stick to discover nests of red ants ; and if occasionally you get a swarm of them on your coat, don't lose your dignity and swear like a drunken sailor, but get them quietly brushed off, and all will go well. Take a view of the different churches, Citadel, etc., from your point of vantage as you pass along. Look out for the tiled roof of the Jesuit church ; and when you come fairly near, you will find a second staircase just off one of the bastions, where you can descend and find yourself soon at your destination. But it is

better to continue along the walls and come down by the steps at the back of the Franciscan Convent.

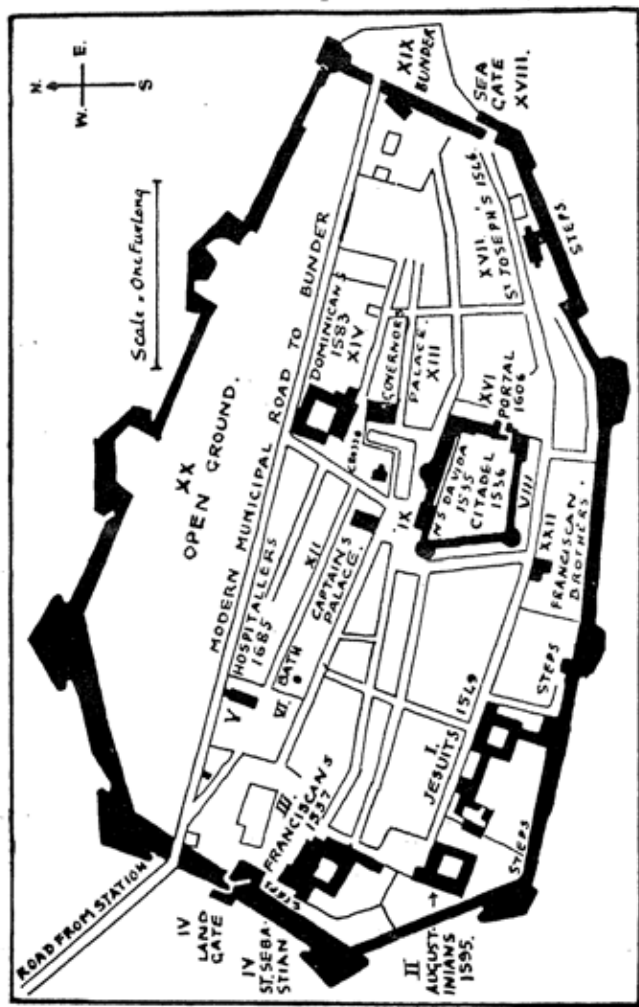
(22) A call can be made at the bungalow of the Franciscan Missionary Brothers, which is labelled "St. Gonsalo Garcia's Orphanage and Horti-Agricultural School." They run a fruit and vegetable farm, and are glad to welcome and help visitors with clean well-water and fruit if in season, and supply information (including this Guide Book) to those who want it. These Brothers, besides the farm, have a large orphanage at Mount Poincur near Borivli in Salsette. The farm plot in Bassein Fort was granted to them by Government in 1926.

Returning Home

It will by this time be about one o'clock. You can enjoy a tiffin, and after that take a rest. Seek a sloping heap of débris which fits your ribs, in a place free from ants, and you can even take a siesta. At three o'clock take tea, and then wander about till the conveyance (previously arranged for) arrives, say at 4-45, to take you back to the station for the 5-32 train.

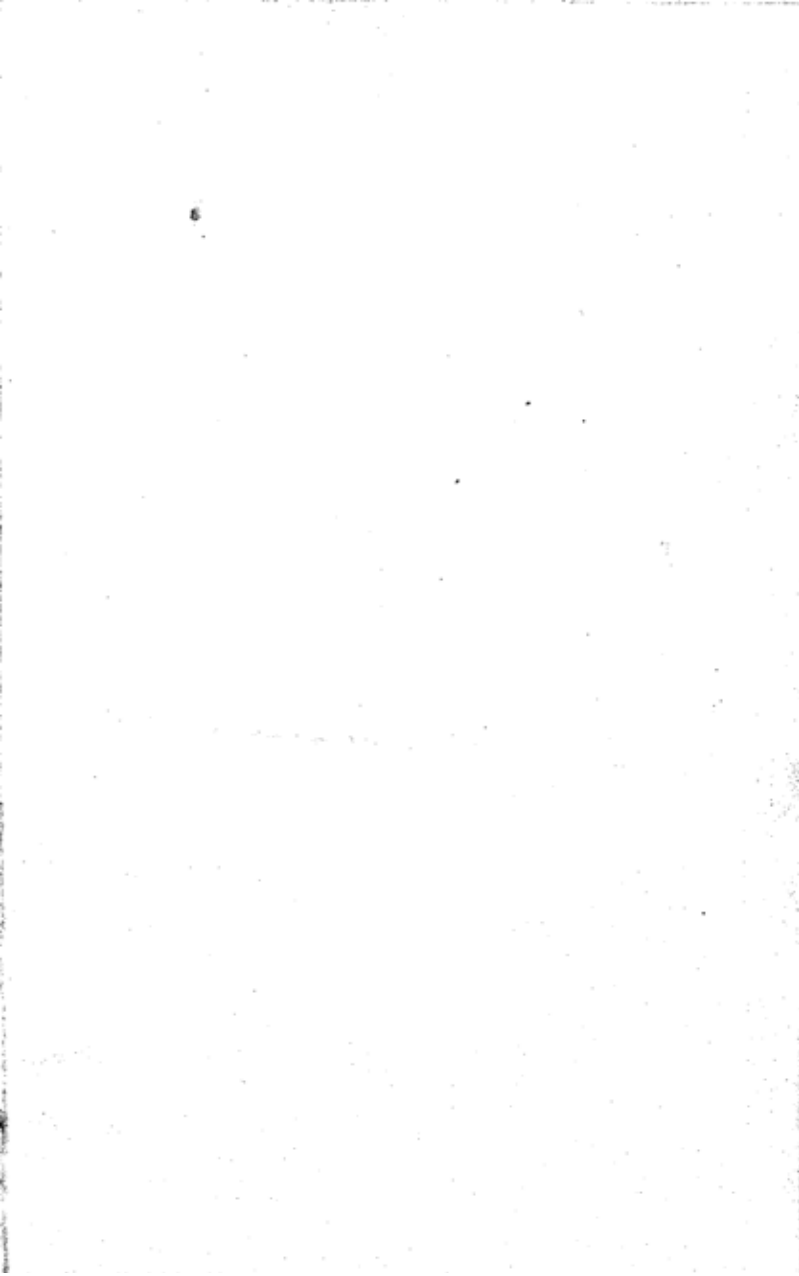
If you have time left, and feel energetic, you could before departing take a walk outside the Fort along the shore, to see what the walls look like from the outside. Secondly you could take a scramble or two into the jungle to realize the large number of ruins they contain. An additional trip of interest (to be made another time) would be to visit all the churches in the neighbourhood, to find out what is old about them ; and particularly to hunt up altars, pulpits, doors, statues and pictures taken from the Fort. The sacristans generally know the traditions, but they do not always know English.

(Copies of this Guide Book may be had from the Examiner Press, Meadows Street, Bombay 1, and from Booksellers, @ 4 annas per copy.

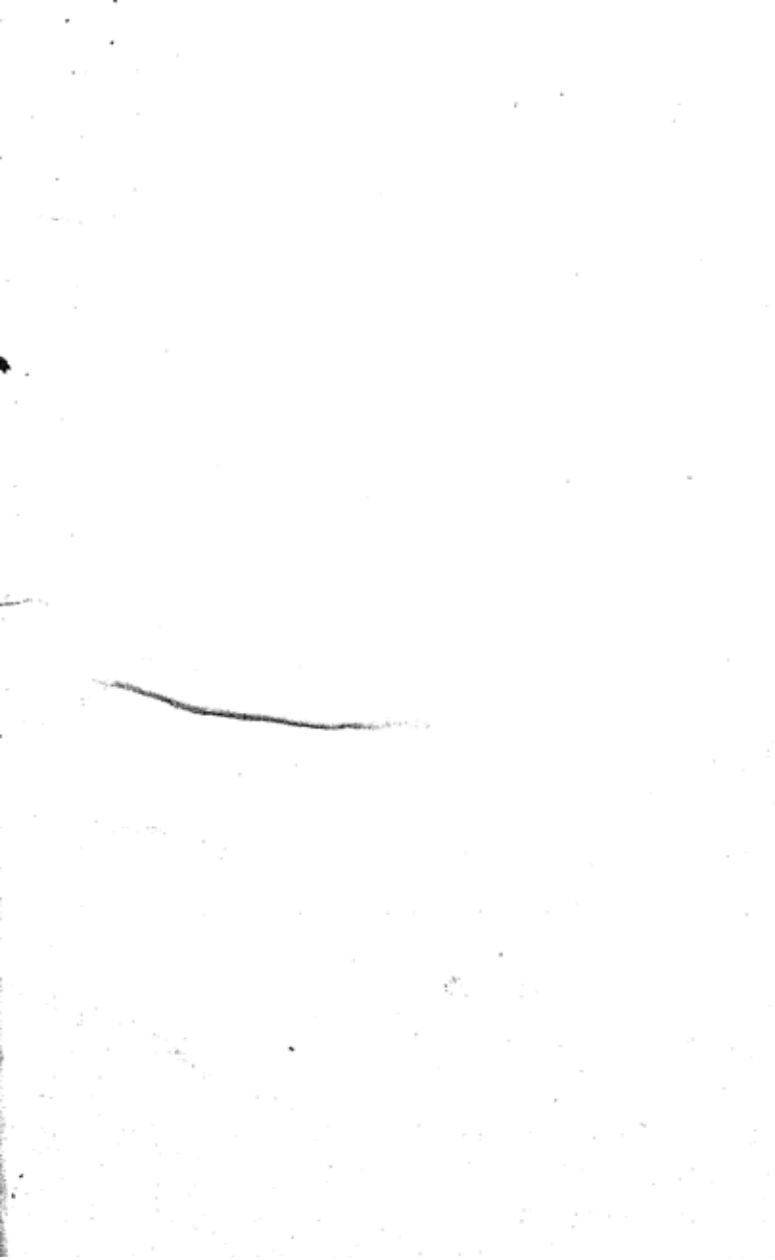


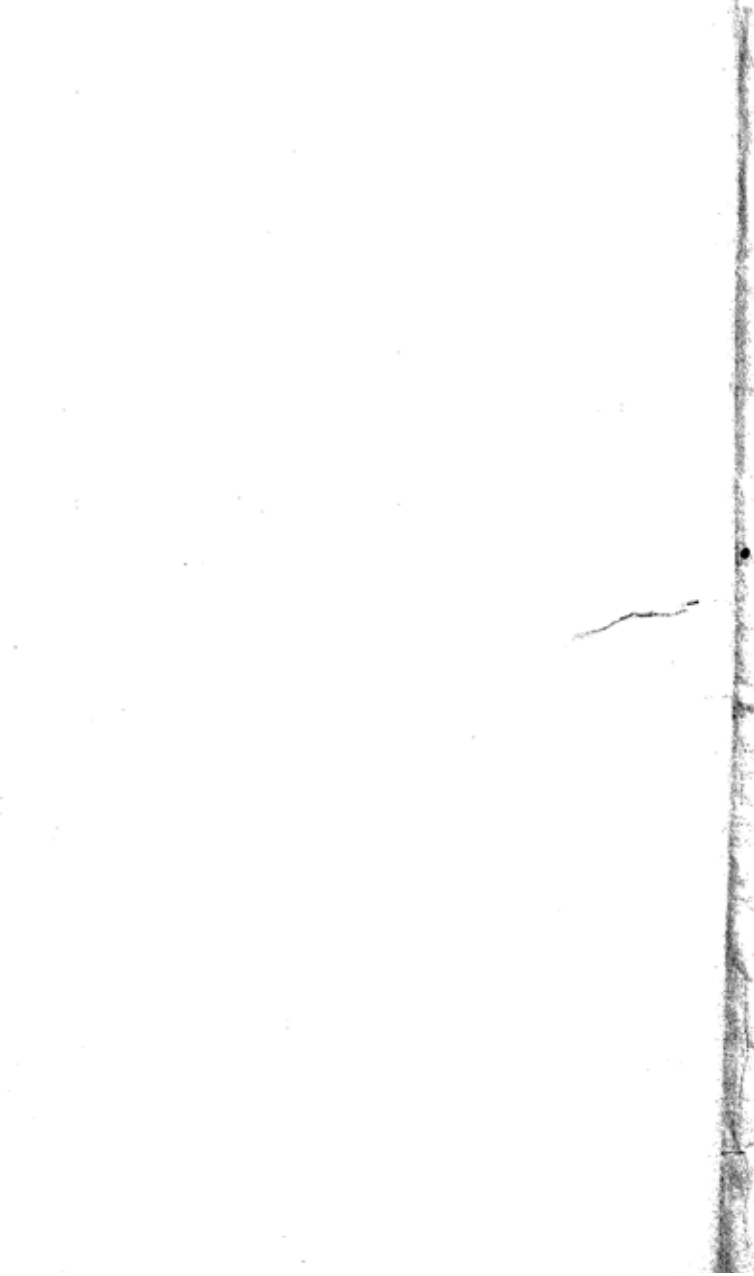
PLAN OF BASSEIN FORT

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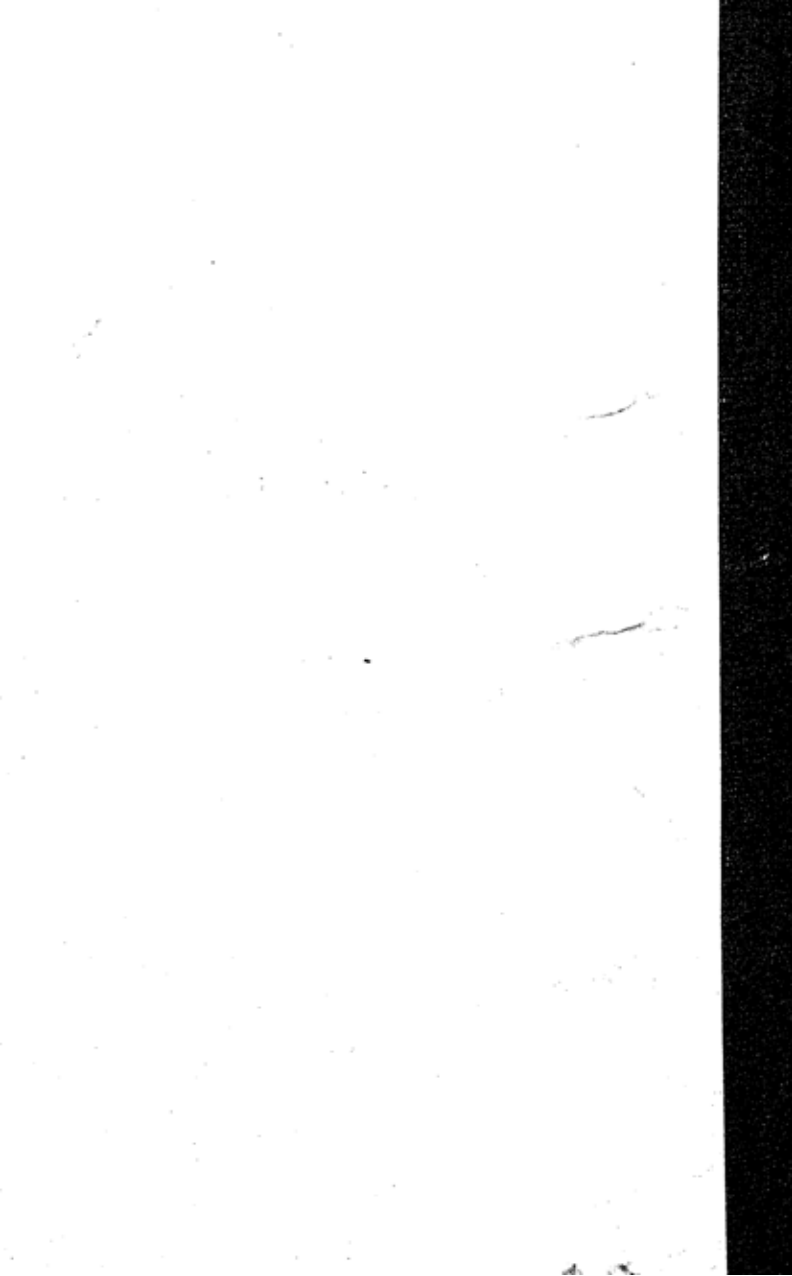












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